



Sermon Resources

Dear Friend,

One of my greatest passions is teaching God's Word and watching the Holy Spirit touch hearts and transform lives. There are few things that bring greater joy or satisfaction.

Over the past two decades I have done regular preaching and teaching at worship services, in mid-week educational classes and in small group settings. When I preached the Seismic Shifts series, something wonderful happened. The imagery of seismic shifts, the idea of little changes making a big difference, struck people in a way that could have only been the Holy Spirit at work.

This series hit a powerful chord in people's hearts and souls. The Lord used these six messages to challenge people to take steps of faith they had never tried before. As a congregation we experienced a time of learning and enthusiasm that continues to this day. People still talk about the way God is leading them to make new and life-changing seismic shifts. It is rare for me to have a week pass and not have someone make a reference to seismic shifts and what God is doing in their life because of what we learned together.

I share this because I believe you are heading for a season of exciting ministry as you launch into Seismic Shifts. As you preach these messages, as people gather to talk and pray in small groups, and as they read the book, *Seismic Shifts* (as well as the related biblical passages), God is going to show up in surprising ways! Please know I am praying for all the churches that will be spending a season of their church year focusing on Seismic Shifts.

In His Great Grace,

Kevin G. Harney

About these Preaching Resources:

Every preacher and teacher presents a message in their own unique way. My hope and prayer is that the resources provided on this disc will be a springboard for you to dive into God's Word and discover the message God wants to bring through you to your congregation. I do not begin to presume that you would, or should, try to bring the exact same message I preached. We serve different groups of people and God wants to help you fashion the right message for the body of people you lead.

So, I have not provided a manuscript to be read, or an exact outline to be followed. What I have done is gathered a number of resources and ideas that will help you design a message that fits the needs and culture of your church. If you use the materials I have provided as well as the numerous ideas I list under "Additional Support," you will have far more material than you can cover in each of the six worship services during your Seismic Shifts campaign. Your job is to look over all that has been provided on this CD, seek the Lord's wisdom, add whatever you feel is appropriate, and bring the message God places on your heart.

In the message resources I have provided the following elements for each sermon:

- **Message Theme:** This will be a brief overview of the core theme of each message.
- **Key Scriptures:** I will give a list of numerous passages that can be used in each message as well as the Bible reading list suggested in the back of *Seismic Shifts*.
- **Brief Message Outline:** This will be a short outline of the main points and sections of the message.
- **Prayer Direction:** I will give some ideas for how to pray as you prepare each message.
- **Creative Message Elements:** I believe visuals can be very helpful in communicating. So, for each message I will give one or more ideas of how to tie the theme in with some kind of visual or creative element.
- **Extended Message Outline:** Finally, I will give an extended teaching outline. This is not meant to be followed exactly, but it is a starting point for you in your preparation. If you use what I have placed in this resource, the "Additional Support" elements listed below, and your own ideas and insights to God's Word, you will have plenty of material for your message.

One note of clarity: I have not made the extended message outlines highly detailed. The best preparation is to read the key Scriptures, read the related chapters in Seismic Shifts (there are three for each message), and then personalize the lessons and applications for your congregation.

Additional Support:

As you prepare your messages for the Seismic Shifts church-wide campaign, there are a number of things I would suggest in your preparation. They are:

- **Spend solid time in prayer.** My words and yours will never change lives in any kind of enduring way. But, the presence and the power of God's Holy Spirit will. Pray for the Spirit's presence and anointing on your life as you prepare and present each message. Pray also for hearts to be soft and ready to receive the message God wants to bring.
- **Get into God's Word.** Each set of sermon resources has a number of biblical passages that dig into the message topic. Spend time reading and meditating on these passages as you prepare your message. I have not given a lot of exposition of the texts in the Extended Message Outline because I do this in the book. On top of the work I have done, I encourage you to do your own study.
- **Read the appropriate section introduction and three chapters in *Seismic Shifts* for each week.** There will be ideas, illustrations and applications that jump out of each section of the book that will help you in your message preparation. Remember, the book, *Seismic Shifts* is broken into six sections that follow your preaching. So, a close read of the section before preaching will be a great help. You might find one of the illustrations I use worth repeating in the message. Or, reading the section of the book might trigger a memory of some experience from your life or the life of your church that would be meaningful in the message.

Don't be shy about using the Seismic Shift Suggestions from the book. Be sure to bring the life-applications from the book right into your message. Even use some of the illustrations from the book. Remember, not everyone has read the book. And, those who have will not mind having what they read reinforced in the message.

- **Review the small group materials.** You will find the small group discussion questions for adults in the appendix section of *Seismic Shifts*. You will also find teen and children's discussion questions on the Seismic Shifts CDROM. If you take time to review all of these materials, they will also get the juices flowing as you prepare your message.
- **Look over the half-sheet teaching outline** provided on the CDROM. This can be printed and handed out to all those who gather for worship. If the congregation is going to have a teaching outline in their hands while you preach, it will be important for you to include the key points of the

outline in your message. I have flagged the keys points from the teaching outline in the Extended Message Outline with the following notation (TO).

- **Review the Power Point presentations.** Each message has a Power Point presentation. You can edit it and shape it to fit how you plan on presenting your message. Be sure to review this and see how you might use it in your message presentation. I have flagged the keys points from the Power Point in the Extended Message Outline with the following notation (PP).
- **Extra credit and bonus stuff.** In the appendix of Seismic Shifts I have given a reading list of some very helpful books and resources for digging deeper into each of the six main themes of Seismic Shifts. If you want to do a little extra reading and research, you might review some of these resources.
- **Pray more.** After you are all prepared to bring the message, spend more time asking God to move and touch the lives of those who gather:
 - Pray for those who are followers of Jesus to have the courage and boldness to make seismic shifts that will create a place for the Spirit of God to move in their lives in amazing new ways.
 - Pray also for those who do not know Jesus to see that the only lasting source of power for life transformation comes from God.
 - Pray for boldness as your present God's Word.

Seismic Shifts Message 1

Shifts That Bring Greater Joy Than You Can Imagine

Message Theme:

Joy is not just pasting a goofy smile on our face and pretending everything is fine. Joy is also not contingent on our daily circumstances. If it is, our joy-quotient will go up and down like a roller coaster. Authentic joy is based on living the way God intended and learning to see ourselves the way God sees us. In this message we will discover seismic shifts that help us live with new levels of joy that are not based on how we feel, but who we know. Specifically, we will discover that true and lasting joy come when we make a choice to grow in spiritual maturity, to see ourselves through God's eyes, and to live with awareness that our circumstances do not dictate our ability to live in the joy God offers his children.

Key Scriptures:

From the preaching resources:

- Ephesians 4:14-18
- Hebrews 5:12-6:1
- Psalm 139
- Philippians 4
- Nehemiah 8

From the weekly reading guide:

- Psalms 4 and 5
- Psalm 30
- Ephesians 4
- Psalm 139
- Philippians 3
- Romans 8

Brief Message Outline:

Shifts That Bring Greater Joy Than You Can Imagine

- The Shift from Infancy to Adulthood (Ephesians 4:14-15)
- The Shift from Doing to Being (Psalm 139)
- The Shift from Somberness to Celebration (Philippians 4:4)

Prayer Direction:

Since this is the kick-off message for Seismic Shifts, take time to pray for the whole church-wide experience. Pray for:

- Your leadership team as they distribute books and materials.
- Small group leaders as they begin their groups.
- Those who will be participating in the Seismic Shifts campaign on any level.
- Yourself as you prepare and present the first message in the Seismic Shifts series.

Pray for those who hear the message to:

- Grow in their desire to move toward spiritual maturity and adulthood.
- Come to a lasting understanding that their value and joy are based on who they are in Christ and not what they do and accomplish in this life.
- Come to a place of living with joyful celebration no matter what life throws at them.

Creative Message Elements:

Lawn Dominos- Consider purchasing a set of “Lawn Dominos” or “Traditional Lawn Dominos.” These are dominos that are close to a foot tall. Once you have them, set up a small domino display somewhere in the front of the church where you will be preaching. This will do two things. First, it will create curiosity as people enter. Just the presence of something new and different creates interest. Second, it will allow you to illustrate a seismic shift (a little movement that has a big impact) in a clear and visual way. There is more information on this in the introduction section to this first message. Also, this creative message element is suggested every week of the series. You might want to read ahead and see how this image is used and develops through the weeks. Note- If you can’t get the large dominos, you can use small ones if you have the capability to project your domino display on a large screen that everyone can see.

Baby Video- Find someone in your church who will allow you to use a video or DVD of them teaching their son or daughter to walk. You will want a short section that shows a child learning to walk, falling, and getting up again. If you can hear the parents cheering the child on, this is even better. There will be more details about this in the extended sermon outline.

Seismic Shift Table (s) – Let children and adults know that at the Seismic Shifts tables (centers) there are lots of regular-sized dominos for them to play with. Encourage them to set up dominos and then see if they can knock them all down by pushing just one over.

Extended Message Outline:

Shifts that Bring Greater Joy than You Can Imagine (PP) (TO)

Series Introduction- Dominos

I will tell you what I did on the first week of this preaching series at my church and you might want to do something similar. I wanted to make the point that a little action can have a big impact (a seismic shift). So, I got a set of giant dominos (called traditional lawn dominos). Each one is almost a foot tall. I set up this cool configuration in the front of the church...going down four stairs...very exciting. As people came in, it definitely caught their interest. As I began preaching about how little changes, in the right place, can transform our lives, I used the illustration of dominos. The right push in the right place can start a chain reaction.

I actually asked the congregation, "How many of you think I can push over one domino and all of them will fall?" About half of the people raised their hands. Then I walked to the bottom domino and pushed it the wrong way. Nothing happened! People actually started saying, "Push the top domino." Kids yelled out, "You pushed the wrong one!" So, I turned to the congregation and said, "So you're telling me pushing over a domino is not enough, it needs to be the right one!" The congregations said, "YES!" So, I walked up to the top of the stairs and asked, "Is this the right domino?" Everyone said that it was. So, I reached over and pushed it backwards, away from the other dominos.

Nothing happened with the dominos, but the people in the congregation were clearly stirred up. "Push it the other way!" So I faced them and asked, "Are you telling me that the chain reaction of falling dominos, the seismic shift, will only happen if I push in the **right place**, and the **right direction**?" They said, "YES!"

So I set up the top domino and asked if they would like me to push it over the right direction. You can guess the answer. I pushed it over and one by one the dominos fell over...across the stage...and down the stairs. When the last one hit the ground, the place erupted in applause!

I then let the congregation know that over the coming six weeks we would be looking at ways we can learn to push in the right place, in the right direction, and see God begin to move in a fresh and transforming way in our lives. The dominos were so popular that I included a domino display each week.

- There are many other images you can use to make the point of a small action making a big impact. In the book introduction I give numerous examples from earthquakes to a spoon taped to a pen. Use whatever

images help make the key point that in many areas of life there are little changes or movements than have huge repercussions (Seismic Shifts, pages 9-13).

- You might want to give an overview of the six specific areas of seismic shifts you will be studying together in the coming weeks (Seismic Shifts, page 12). Also, use this as one more time to encourage everyone to read three chapters of *Seismic Shifts* each week, follow the Bible reading plan, and also to join a small group.

Pray: Pause and pray for God to bring surprising and powerful transformation in the life of every person present.

Message Theme Introduction (PP) (TO) (Joy Is a Choice!): In the book I tell the story of my two grandmothers to illustrate that joy is a choice (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 42-45). Tell your own story to illustrate this truth. If you want a powerful story to tell, share about Ivan Brown. I met him on a trip to Jamaica and was overwhelmed by the joy of the Lord that flows through the life of this man. Here is a short version of his story. Everything you read below is true.

Illustration- Ivan C. Brown was fresh out of training as a police officer in Jamaica. Though he had been raised by a godly Christian mother he had strayed from the faith. The Bible passages she taught and the life she lived had impacted Ivan, but his life had moved in a very different direction than his mother had desired.

Ivan received the call, a domestic dispute had erupted and he was to go and help settle things down. When he arrived at the address, there was a man who was drunk, angry and waving a machete. Ivan tried to calm him down and asked him to place the deadly weapon on the ground. The man cooperated and put the knife down.

What Officer Brown did not know was the man had another machete tucked in his belt behind his back. As Ivan approached, the drunken man quickly grabbed the machete, raised it above his head, and slashed down hard and fast toward Ivan's skull. In a reflexive action, Ivan raised his arm to block the deadly blow...it cost him an arm. The outraged man raised the machete again and Ivan blocked with the other arm ...it also was severed. Ivan had no arms to block the next two blows so they landed on his skull.

He fell to the ground and was left to die.

As Ivan lay there, drowning on his own blood, he remembered the Bible verses his mother taught him. He talked with God. He met Jesus. With every indication that he would die before being found and brought to a hospital, Ivan made his peace with God.

Doctors would tell you that a man with the injuries Ivan sustained should have bled out and died in a matter of minutes. But, miraculously, Ivan lay there for almost thirty minutes before being found, put in the back of a truck and driven down the bumpy road to a hospital.

Ivan lived.

He lost both of his arms. He has two scars across his skull, one on the right side and one on the left. He also has a smile that lights up a room and an unquenchable joy that baffles and amazes most people who meet him. Ivan needs help to shave, go the bathroom, eat his food, and perform the simplest tasks you and I take for granted. He would also tell you that his life has more joy than he can contain.

Many people would give up on life after suffering what Ivan endured. Instead, he has given his whole heart and life to Jesus. He now has two primary vocations. He works in Community Relations for the Jamaica Constabulary Force in Montego Bay. He also travels around the world telling people about the life-changing joy they can experience through knowing Jesus Christ.

If you get to meet Ivan one day, you will be startled by his smile and the joy that has captured his heart. Hanging at his right and left side you will see lifeless prosthetic arms. But, Ivan lives with more health and joy than most people you will ever meet. He is a living example that joy is a choice!

Quote- You might want to read the quote from C.S. Lewis (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 16-18) about God wanting us to experience infinite joy.

(PP) (TO) A Journey of Joy...The Shift from Infancy to Adulthood (Ephesians 4:14-15)

Read- Chapter one of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message. Also, feel free to use some of the illustrations from the book that hit home for you. Not everyone will have read the chapter before the message. For those who have not, it might spark interest in doing the reading. For those who have read the chapter, they will feel familiar with the information and appreciate the refresher.

Read: (PP) Ephesians 14:14-15 and Hebrews 5:12-6:1

- Talk about God's desire to see his children grow up and mature in faith. Compare this to an earthly parent who longs to see their child take steps forward in every area of life.

Illustration- Show a short clip of someone's family video they captured as their child was taking first steps.

- Talk about how God rejoices and cheers us on as we take steps toward maturity. Reflect on what natural spiritual growth should look like. God longs to see us take consistent steps toward him. Growth should be the norm...stagnancy should be seen as a deviation.

Seven Indicators of Growth- Review the seven signs that we are growing closer to God and talk about how these steps of growth can lead to joy in our lives (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 24-29).

- Ask the question: What step can you take toward spiritual maturity? (PP) (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestions: Give some ideas for ways followers of Jesus can take little steps forward that will lead to authentic spiritual maturity. Some ideas might be:

- Reading the Bible for five minutes a day five days a week. (PP)
- Making space at a set time each day to talk with God in prayer.
- Looking into volunteering to serve in a ministry in the church.
- Consider becoming part of a small group.
- Try attending a Bible study or education class once a week for a month.
- Pray for one person who does not know God's love each day for a week.
- There are lots of other options. The key is to help people see that there are little, doable actions and steps that will help them grow up in faith. When they take these steps, joy flows!

(PP) (TO) A Heart Filled with Joy...The Shift from Doing to Being
(Psalm 139)

Read- Chapter two of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: (PP) Psalm 139:13-16 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

- Talk about how God sees us (even in our mother's womb) and already loves us and values us. Look at the radical contrast of how the world demands accomplishment but God loves us as we are (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 31-40).

- You might want to read the story about nap time in kindergarten or tell your own story about when you first realized that many people would value you based on your performance.
- Remind people of the joy that comes when we know we are loved. Brennan Manning gives a wonderful exposition of this in the first chapter of his book, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, published by Multnomah.
- The key in this portion of the message is to help people see that their value is not contingent on what they do or how they perform. God loves and values us even when we don't measure up in the eyes of the world. This reality, when we embrace it, brings freedom and joy.

Ask the question: Do you live with a deep and profound awareness that you are precious in God's sight, loved by him and the apple of his eye? (PP) (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestion: Personalize 1 John 3:1 and commit it to memory. (PP)

(PP) (TO) A Life Overflowing with Joy...The Shift from Somberness to Celebration (Philippians 4:4)

Read- Chapter three of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: (PP) Philippians 4:4 and Romans 8:18

- Teach about Paul's context when he wrote the letter to the Christians in the city of Philippi. He was in jail for preaching about Jesus. He did all the right things, but still got tossed in a cell. Yet, in this harsh environment, Paul still lived with joy. What a reminder that joy is not based on our circumstances. You might also want to spend some time looking at Paul's suffering logged in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28.

Illustration- You might want to collect five or six wedding pictures from couples in your congregation (preferably ones who are known to have a strong and joy-filled marriage relationship). Have these ready to show as part of your Power Point. Project the pictures and ask people to look at the smiles, the joy on the faces of the couple. Remind them that God says the church is the bride of Christ. He looks at us with joy, affection, and love. We need to live with a deep conviction that we are passionately loved by God...this is a source of unquenchable joy.

- Take time to look at the reality that there are things in this life that can discourage joy, “Joy Busters” (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 47-48).
- There are many things that will help propel us forward on our journey toward joy. Take time to look at the three discussed in chapter three of *Seismic Shifts*:
 - Forgetting What Lies Behind (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 48-49).
 - Accepting God’s Forgiveness (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 49-51).
 - Keep Things in Perspective (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 51).

Illustration- When you talk about forgetting what lies behind, you might want to show short clips from *Napoleon Dynamite* and *Chariots of Fire* (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 48-49).

Ask the questions: What will it take to move you toward a lifestyle of joy? What can we do to make sure our church is a place of overflowing joy? (PP) (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestion: Adopt a joy mentor. (PP)

Closing Thoughts- Offer some *Seismic Shifts* Suggestions for application as you close. Also, give a challenge for your congregation to be a place of joy. In the same way that our lives can be overflowing with joy, the happiest place in the world should be the church. Challenge the congregation to bring a spirit of joyous celebration with them every time they gather.

Seismic Shifts Message 2

Shifts That Expand Your Faith

Message Theme:

Too many followers of Jesus allow their faith to become static, staid, and downright boring. God longs for his children to experience ever-deepening levels of intimacy with him. He wants our faith to be growing and expanding with each passing day. In this message we will look at three specific shifts we can make that will cause our faith to expand more than we ever imagined it could. Specifically, we will learn that our faith grows as we learn to focus on God as worshippers, feast on his Word as learners, and communicate with him through an authentic prayer life.

Key Scriptures:

From the preaching resources:

- Isaiah 6:1-9
- John 3:30
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Mark 1:35
- John 10:1-6

From the weekly reading guide:

- Hebrews 11-12:3
- Isaiah 6:1-8 and Revelation 5
- Psalm 119:1-88
- Psalm 119:89-176
- John 17
- Matthew 6:5-15 and Colossians 1:1-14

Brief Message Outline:

Shifts That Expand Your Faith

- The Shift from me to God (John 3:30)
- The Shift from Snacking to Feasting (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- The Shift from Monologue to Dialogue (John 10:1-6)

Prayer Direction:

Since God longs for his children to experience consistent growth in their life of faith, spend time praying for the Holy Spirit to move those who will hear the message forward in three specific areas:

- That their faith would deepen as they turn their eyes off themselves and onto God as they grow into authentic worshippers.
- That their faith expands as they learn to feast of God's Word through personal study of the Bible.
- That their faith deepens as they raise the level of personal intimacy with God through natural communication in prayer.

Creative Message Elements:

Lawn Dominos- Consider using your set of "Lawn Dominos" at the start of your message to reinforce the idea that little movements can have a big impact. Set them up in an interesting configuration, talk again about the idea of seismic shifts, and then topple the first one and let them fall.

When I preached Seismic Shifts I had planned to do the domino display the first week as a visual aid to capture the main concept of the seismic shifts but I had no intention of using this visual every week of the series. But, after the first Sunday I had so many people talk about how much they enjoyed the dominos, and how their children got the concept because of the dominos, I decided to do them one more week. We excuse the children in our church before the message so they can attend a children's worship experience. A lot of the kids asked me why I didn't do the dominos before they left. They saw the display set up in the front of the church but they had to go before I pushed the dominos over.

Here is a funny side note. The second week of the series, when I got up to teach, I saw a wall of kids standing in the back of our worship center. All the kids that were going to children's worship had talked to their parents and the children's worship leaders and they were going to stay until I pushed the dominos over. This continued for the entire series!

What this led to was the need for me to be creative and allow the domino display to get more complex each week. One week I set up a table with a display made up of regular sized dominos. When the last of these fell, it pushed a tennis ball off the table and down a little ramp I built. This rolled down and hit one of the big dominos which in turn set off a chain reaction that split in two directions down a set of stairs. I asked the congregation if they thought I could push over one little domino and it could cause a chain reaction that would end with every domino falling over. No one doubted the seismic shifts concept of little things having a big impact, but some looked at the complexity of the display and thought it would not work. The good news is, it worked at each of our morning services and the place went wild when the last domino fell.

One week my idea of the dominos was so complex I actually had a person capture it on video tape mid-week and we showed the clip at the start of the service on Sunday. I also did this because we had so much happening on the stage that Sunday that there was no room for me to set up a domino display.

You might be wondering, what if my domino display doesn't work? What if only a few dominos fall, but they don't all topple over? Will this ruin the imagery of seismic shifts? Don't worry about this. On the second week of the series (when I realized I would be doing a domino display every week) I told the congregation that I had a special seismic shifts lesson I wanted to teach them but I would only do so when one of my displays did not work and when some of the dominos were left standing. That week my display worked perfectly in both services. The funny thing was, a number of people came up to me after the service and tried to get me to tell them the "Special Seismic Shifts Lesson". I told them I would only share this insight when and if all my dominos did not fall. This created a strange level of interest and curiosity. I will tell you about that special lesson in next week's sermon notes.

Video Clip: What About Bob- If you want a fun image that parallels the concept of seismic shifts, rent the movie, What About Bob. Watch it and pick one of the many "Baby Steps" scenes. All through the movie the concept of taking little steps, one at a time, is emphasized. This could be a creative way to reinforce the concept of seismic shifts, little movements that make a big impact.

Balloon- Have a large round balloon ready (actually have a few of them). As you talk about experiencing a faith that will expand. Blow up the balloon. If you are not sure if you can preach and blow up a balloon at the same time, have someone else ready to blow up the balloon for you. Be sure it is large enough to hold a lot of air. Talk about the fact that a balloon has a limit, a capacity for how much air it can hold. At some point, you must stop blowing or it will explode. Then, talk about our capacity for growing in faith. Do we have a limit, a capacity? The answer is no! Our faith can grow as big as the God we know...and God is infinite. This means our lives can be an ever-expanding experience of faith growth. What good news! What an exciting adventure it is to walk with God and to know that until we meet Jesus face-to-face, we can experience ongoing and constant growth in faith.

Side Note- If the balloon happens to pop...aside from getting everyone's attention, you can use this to illustrate the fact that a balloon has limits to the air it can hold. We are not limited to how much our faith can grow. No matter where we are in our walk with Jesus, there are deeper places of faith we can experience.

Extended Message Outline:

Shifts That Expand Your Faith (PP) (TO)

Message Theme Introduction- Every person who follows Jesus has a deep inner longing to see their faith grow and expand. God has placed this desire in each of his children. The real question is, HOW BIG CAN YOUR FAITH GROW? The answer is simple, AS BIG AS THE GOD YOU KNOW! Since our God is infinitely big, our faith should be ever expanding as we get to know God better.

Illustration: You can use the balloon illustration at this point in your message if you feel it will fit.

The good news is, God has given us some very specific ways we can experience growing intimacy with him. There are seismic shifts we can make that will open the door for significant growth in our spiritual lives. This will be the focus on this message.

Illustration- Use the large dominos to bring people back to the concept of little things making a big impact. Then, introduce how this can be true in our lives of faith. Be clear that there are little steps we can take that will take us to new levels of intimacy with God and that these shifts will be the focus of this message. Then, send the dominos falling. Remember, if all the dominos don't fall, there is a special lesson to be learned. This is found in the dominos materials all through these sermon outlines.

- Hebrews 12:2 (TO)

(PP) (TO) The Shift from Me to God...a whole new perspective on life and worship (John 3:30)

Read- Chapter four of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: Isaiah 6:1-9 and (PP) John 3:22-30 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

- Reflect on how both Isaiah and John experienced significant life-transformation when their eyes turned off of self and on to God. Isaiah had a vision of God and John saw God face-to-face in the person of Jesus. In both cases they were transformed by this experience of worship. Nothing changes us more than an encounter with the living God.

Illustration- You might want to tell the story of Cameron (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 56-57). If you do, have a chair (with arms) up on the stage as you reflect on how Cameron planned on overcoming his fears. He was hoping that distracting himself by gripping the arms of the chair (do this as you describe it) and looking at other people would get him through the trip. But, the only thing that really helped was looking at his father. What an image! What a reminder!

- When our eyes move from self to the Savior, our whole life perspective is transformed. This is the heart of worship. This is the seismic shift from me to God.
- Spend time reflecting on how we can keep our eyes fixed on God through a normal day. A great resource to help on this topic is the curriculum, “Ordinary Day with Jesus,” by John Ortberg.
- Also spend time reflecting on the wonderful gift of corporate worship we can experience on a weekly basis (or more often) with God’s people. Talk about ways people can engage more fully in the worship experience. Talk also about the value of being connected to a local body of believers that meets on a regular basis to worship together.
- Talk about the signs of spiritual myopia and how we can overcome it in our times of worship as a community of believers (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 60-68). Give a challenge for people to engage in worship on a whole new level.
- As we learn to turn our eyes off of self and onto Jesus through our days, in our worship experiences, in all we do, we will experience deeper faith than we thought possible.

Ask the question: What is one seismic shift that will help you fix your eyes more on God and less on you? (PP) (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestion: Being fully present (PP).

(PP) (TO) The Shift from Snacking to Feasting...come to the table of God’s Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Read- Chapter five of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: (PP) 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalm 119; and James 1:22-25 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

- God has set a feast before us. His Word, the Bible is like a banquet table of truth, wisdom, inspiration, challenge, and so much more. Sadly, we have become so use to having the Bible at our fingertips that we don't even realize what a gift we have. God has set a feast and invites us to dine. We tend to nibble and snack on the Word and miss the fullness of all it has to offer us. In chapter 5 of *Seismic Shifts* I write about a scene from the scene from the movie, *Hook*. You might want to show a clip from this scene if it would be appropriate in your setting. If you do, it gives a wonderful picture of a banquet table set with amazing foods, but Peter is not able to see it. This is a picture of many people today. They have a Bible, maybe many Bibles, but day after day passes and they take an occasional snack and miss the feast. Invite people to come and feast on God's Word and see how this changes their lives.
- Look at the five images the Bible uses of itself (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 76-79). Give a vision of the amazing things God can do in our lives as we learn to feast on his Word.
- Take time to look at practical ways people can begin to feast on God's Word. There are many ideas found in chapter 5 of *Seismic Shifts* (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 79-83).
- You might want to show a short clip from the "invisible feast" scene in the movie, *Hook*.
- Give an invitation to come to the banquet table and feast on the gift of the Bible.

Ask the question: What is one way you can consume more of God's Word?
(PP) (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestion: The Bible as a prayer guide (PP).

(PP) (TO) The Shift from Monologue to Dialogue...learn to listen
(John 10:1-6)

Read- Chapter six of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: (PP) John 10:1-6 and Mark 1:35 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

- If you have a story of a time God spoke to you, share this with the congregation. It does not have to be overly dramatic or mind-shattering.

In some ways, it is better if your story seems more ordinary, so people can relate. The key is to let people know that you believe, you know, that God still speaks to his children.

For too many people prayer has become a routine of listing what we want and what we feel we need. God longs for us to make the shift from monologue to dialogue. He wants us to be in a two-way relationship with him.

- In chapter six of *Seismic Shifts* we look at how God speaks through: the Bible, other people, circumstances, the still small voice of the Holy Spirit, and even through dreams and visions (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 87-89). Spend time reflecting on these and illustrating them. The key is that people learn that one way for their faith to expand is by learning to listen for and hear the voice of God speaking into their life circumstances on a daily basis. Imagine a congregation of people who regularly responded to the conviction of the Spirit, the call to love, the prompting to share their faith, the instruction to love each other. The results could be...Seismic!
- Walk through the four step process of learning to listen to God (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 90-92). Pay special attention to the "Scripture Test." Remind people that God will never lead them to do something that is contrary to what he has revealed in his Word.
- You might want to touch on the process of praying with Jesus by using the Lord's Prayer. You probably won't have much time for this, but encourage everyone to read chapter six and give this a try.

Ask the question: What can you do to listen more closely for God's voice? (PP)
(TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestion: Take a mini-silent retreat (PP).

Close the message by reminding people that God longs for our faith to expand. This happens as we grow deep as worshipers, feast on his Word, and communicate intimately through prayer.

Seismic Shifts Message 3

Shifts That Bring Health and Rest

Message Theme:

God never intended for his children to live frenzied and anxiety ridden lives. Yet, so many of us do...including pastors. In this message we will focus on God's plan for his children to live in a way that brings rest, refreshment and peace. Specifically, we will discover how we can find health and rest through learning to observe a weekly Sabbath (rest for our souls), developing healthy habits as we care for our bodies (rest for our bodies), and dealing with worry in a way that honors God (rest for our minds).

Key Scriptures:

From the preaching resources:

- Isaiah 30:15-18
- Psalm 127:1-2
- 1 Corinthians 6:19
- Philippians 4:6-7

From the weekly reading guide:

- Genesis 1:1-2:3 and Exodus 20:8-11
- Mark 2:23-3:6 and Luke 6:1-11
- 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and Matthew 6:25-34
- Psalm 139
- Philippians 4
- John 14

Brief Message Outline:

Shifts That Bring Health and Rest

- The Shift from Rushing to Slowing (Isaiah 30:15 and Exodus 20:8-11)
- The Shift from Stuffed to Satisfied (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
- The Shift from Anxiety to Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

Prayer Direction:

Because so many people live driven and unhealthy lifestyles, there will be a deep longing to hear this message, but also a lot of resistance to actually putting the

seismic shifts offered in this sermon into practice. As you prepare for this message, pray in the following directions:

- For your own health (spiritual, physical and emotional) and the health of your family members. Ask God to speak to you and for the Holy Spirit to convict you in any areas you have slipped out of balance when it comes to your own health.
- For those who hear the message to be ready to accept the challenge to live in a way that is counter-cultural.
- For God's people in your church to be so transformed in their hearts, bodies and minds that their non-believing friends will ask them what made the difference and they can share about God's plan for lives filled with joy and health on every level.

Creative Message Elements:

Lawn Dominos- Consider using your set of "Lawn Dominos" at the start of this message to reinforce the idea that little movements can have a big impact. Set them up in a new and more complex configuration, talk again about the idea of seismic shifts, and then topple the first one and let them fall. Once again, I encourage that you do this, in some form, each week of the series.

Remind people that you have a bonus lesson to teach them if all the dominos don't fall. Here is what I taught when this finally happened as I preached this series. I simply reminded people that when we make seismic shifts, sometimes things don't go as planned. Sometimes a chain reaction starts, things begin to move forward, but they just stop. When this happens, pick up right where you left off. You don't have to go back to domino one. At this point, I walked over to the place in the display where the dominos stopped falling. I just reached over and pushed the domino and the chain reaction started up again. I reminded the congregation that when they start making a choice to change their actions and attitudes in little ways, change will come.

If they discover they have slipped back into an old bad pattern or have given up on a new life direction, they can just start again right where they left off. For instance, if they have made a decision to read the Bible for five minutes a day, five days a week (a little change that could transform their life) but one day they realize that they have not picked up their Bible for a week, there is no need to wallow in guilt and give up. Just pick up the Bible and begin again that day. This simple bonus lesson spoke to many hearts.

Dive Video- Find someone in your congregation who has a video or DVD of a SCUBA or SNUBA dive. As you talk about diving deep and what happens when we stop skimming over the surface of life and actually go deep, show a short clip of this video.

Testimony- Invite someone to share a testimony about how they experienced the peace of God during a time of deep loss and personal turmoil because they sought God in prayer. This can be done live or on a video. If you have someone share a testimony live, I would encourage you to have them write it out so they know what they will be sharing.

Lazy Boy and a Bag of Doritos- Have a big, comfortable recliner near where you will be teaching. When you talk about the idea of Sabbath, sit in the chair, open a bag of Doritos and lay back. Acknowledge that for some people, the idea of rest, unwinding, and refreshment looks a lot like what they are seeing. The truth is, God's plan for rest is much bigger and goes much deeper. God wants us to experience rest in the depth of our soul, in our emotional life, and in our physical bodies.

Extended Message Outline:

Shifts That Bring Health and Rest (PP) (TO)

Illustration- Introduce the idea of seismic shifts using the dominos and let people know you will be focusing on shifts that lead to health and rest on three levels: spiritual, physical and emotional.

- Talk about the “Robert Syndrome” (*Seismic Shifts*, page 102). Focus on how our culture drives us to go, go and then go some more! But, God has a better plan for our lives. He actually wants us to learn to experience peace and rest in our daily lives. God's intention is not for us to destroy our health and live on the ragged edge of a mental and physical crash!

Ask the question: Do you feel rested, refreshed and healthy today? (PP) (TO)

(PP) (TO) The Shift from Rushing to Slowing... Rest for your soul found in Sabbath (Isaiah 30:15 and Exodus 20:8-11)

Read- Chapter seven of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: (PP) Isaiah 30:15-18; Exodus 20:8-11 and Matthew 11:28-30 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

- Introduce the concept that the Sabbath is a gift from God and is meant to bring us rest and joy (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 103-105). If you minister in a context where people deal with high levels of legalism, you might want to address this problem when it comes to understanding the Sabbath. If you do this, be sure to review how excessive the legalism had become in

Jesus' day (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 105-109). If your ministry context is one where people have very little consciousness of the value of a Sabbath, present this idea as a wonderful gift from a loving God. (PP) There are four slides that focus on Sabbath.

- Spend some time reflecting on some of the things that will make a person's Sabbath rich, restful and life-giving.

Illustration- You might want to use the Lazy Boy and Doritos image at this time and let people know that Sabbath is a lot more than just kicking back and disengaging your mind.

- Dig into the three declarations (PP) we make when we commit to set aside one day out of seven for Sabbath rest (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 109-112):
 - We trust God is capable of running the universe without us.
 - We are confident God can provide all we need in six days of labor.
 - We understand that slowing down to meet with God and his people is a priority in our lives.

These are declarations that are radically counter cultural and might rub some people the wrong way. The work-a-holics and A-type personalities might struggle with these declarations, but if we are going to make a shift toward a life of health and rest, Sabbath will be part of the picture God paints for us. If you are a pastor who works seven days a week, it just might be time for some self-examination.

- He sure to point out that God rested. He took a Sabbath (Genesis 2:2-3). If God, who is omnipotent, took a Sabbath, who are we to think we don't need one?

Ask the questions: Why is it so hard to walk in the spirit of God's Sabbath? What will help you discover the rest of Sabbath? (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestions: Two options on the slide (PP).

- Close this section by reflecting on the temptation to skim over life's greatest gifts and give an encouragement to dive deep and experience the wonder of all God has for us. You might want to use a video clip of underwater sea life as you talk about this (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 112-113).

(PP) (TO) The Shift from Stuffed to Satisfied...rest for your body, God's temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Read- Chapter eight of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: (PP) 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and 2 Corinthians 7:1 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

- Talk about how our culture teeters between an excessive drive to be perfect in our physical appearance and also a temptation to eat too much and exercise too little. It seems almost schizophrenic but our culture tugs us in two radically different directions when it comes to our physical health and appearance.
- Dig into a few passages that call us to care for our bodies and honor God in them (Romans 12:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Ask the question: What are one or two shifts you can make that will improve your physical health? (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestions: Touch on each of the eight suggestions for transformation found in chapter eight of *Seismic Shifts* (pages 119-127). Remind people that it is little shifts, over time, that will change our lives. Encourage them to pick one or two of these suggestions and begin small. (PP)

(PP) (TO) The Shift from Anxiety to Peace...rest for your mind in prayer (Philippians 4:6-7)

Read- Chapter nine of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: (PP) Philippians 4:6-7; Matthew 6:25-34 and John 14:27 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

Testimony- Have someone share a testimony about a time they experienced turmoil in their life, but peace in their heart as they brought their hardship to God in prayer.

- Look at the three anxiety busters (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 133-140) and how to move from:
 - Worry to Prayer
 - My Plans to God's Will
 - Alone to Hand-in-Hand with Jesus

Talk about how making these shifts can reduce our emotional stress and set our lives on a course that is marked by inner peace and confidence, even when things are swirling on the outside.

Ask the question: What step can you take that will allow God's peace to flow freely into your life? (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestions: Three options are listed (PP).

Close by painting a picture of God's plan for us to live with health and rest in every area of our lives and invite people to make a commitment to take small steps in the right direction that will lead to peace in their souls, bodies and minds.

Seismic Shifts Message 4

Shifts That Build Dynamic and Lasting Relationships

Message Theme:

God desires for us to have thriving relationships. In his Word he gives ways to build relationships filled with grace and health. In this message we look at three shifts that will lead to the kind of relationships God wants us to experience. Specifically, we will see that strong and God-honoring relationships are built on expressing honest words of encouragement, serving as Jesus served, and speaking the truth in love.

Key Scriptures:

From the preaching resources:

- Matthew 22:34-40
- James 3:6-8
- Proverbs 18:21
- Proverbs 12:18
- John 13:13-15
- Zechariah 8:16-17
- Ephesians 4:15

From the weekly reading guide:

- Proverbs 12
- Proverbs 18
- John 13
- Philippians 2
- Mark 10
- John 19

Brief Message Outline:

Shifts That Build Dynamic and Lasting Relationships

- The Shift from Burning to Building (Proverbs 18:21)
- The Shift from Served to Serving (John 13:3-5 and Mark 10:45)
- The Shift from Flattery to Truth-Telling (Zechariah 8:16-17)

Prayer Direction:

Relationships are complex and demand continual attention if they are to remain healthy and life-giving. Yet, of all the commandments, God says number one and two are loving God and loving people. As you prepare for this message, pray for the following:

- For any relationships in your life that have become strained or unhealthy. If God places a specific person on your heart, do what you can, before bringing this message, to seek healing and reconciliation in this relationship.
- For married couples in your congregation to hear the three seismic shifts in this message and really adopt them in their home and the way they interact with their spouse.
- For the leaders in your church to make a commitment to encourage, serve, and tell the truth to each other.

Creative Message Elements:

Lawn Dominos- Consider using your set of “Lawn Dominos” at the start of this message to reinforce the idea that little movements can have a big impact. Set them up in a new and more complex configuration, talk again about the idea of seismic shifts, and then topple the first one and let them fall. Once again, I encourage that you do this, in some form, each week of the series. The key will be creativity. On week four I actually made the dominos go up the stairs in the front of our worship center. I did this because some of the people in the church actually gave me a challenge to see if I could do this.

What’s More Complex? Bring something up with you to illustrate how complex things need regular maintenance. Depending on your setting you can bring something ranging from a lap top computer to a car engine. Focus on how wise people will do regular maintenance on complex machines so that they will keep performing the way they were designed to work. Then, compare the complexity of human relationships and emphasize why it is important to do regular check-ups on our relationships. This theme is found in the introduction to section four (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 142-143).

Words of Blessing- Have someone in your church produce a short video (just 60-90 seconds). Invite people of various ages to look at a video camera and give a compliment or a word of blessing. Have people say things like: “I love you,” “You are beautiful,” “I am thankful for you,” “You are my best friend,” “You are handsome,” “I praise God for your life,” “I love being with you...” Recruit someone to edit these and create a short montage of affirmations and play them when you talk about the power of words to encourage us. Ask people to think about how they feel when they listen to these words. (In our church many videos produced by high school students...they do a great job).

Extended Message Outline:

Shifts That Build Dynamic and Lasting Relationships (PP) (TO)

Illustration- Use the dominos again and talk about how small changes in our attitudes and actions can bring big change in our relationships...the kind of change that honors God, blesses those we love, and helps us enter a new level of intimacy in relationship with the people in our lives.

Illustration- If you have brought up a computer or a car, use this to illustrate the wisdom of doing regular maintenance. Cars need oil changes and computers need anti-virus protection. It does not take long for complex things to break down without regular check-ups. This is even more true of our highly complex relationships.

- Think about what Jesus said when he was asked, "...which is the greatest commandment?" His answer was simple yet profound. In effect he said, "Love God and love people." Take time to look at Matthew 22:34-40 and remind those gathered that God is deeply concerned that they have vital and loving relationships with the people he has placed in their lives.

Ask the question: Are your relationships growing, positive and filled with mutual encouragement? (PP) (TO)

(PP) (TO) The Shift from Burning to Building...the power of encouragement (Proverbs 18:21)

Read- Chapter ten of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: (TO) Ephesians 4:25-32; (PP) Proverbs 18:21 and 12:18 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

- Look closely at the warnings about the power of the tongue (our words) to do great damage to others. This is no surprise to anyone. We have all felt the cold blade of sharp words cutting into our hearts.

Illustration- You might want to tell your own story of how words have hurt you, or how your careless words hurt another person.

- One of the greatest poisons in the life of a church is grumbling and complaining. Take time to expound on 1 Corinthians 10:6-10 (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 150-152). Look at this topic honestly and talk about how this can become acceptable behavior in our churches, homes, school and

work places. God sees a complaining spirit as sinful. This does not mean that honest critique is forbidden, but God compares a complaining and grumbling spirit to idolatry and sexual immorality. He takes it seriously and so should we. This would be a great time for a pastor exhortation about the need for your congregation to identify this as a sin and agree that it will not be part of your church life.

- James gives us very serious warnings about the potential for damage that lies in our mouths. In James 3:3-12 we are warned that our words can be like a wild fire.
- Talk about your church becoming a ZTZ when it comes to grumbling (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 152-154). In the church I serve we actually treat a complaining spirit as sin. Our board of Elders exercises loving spiritual discipline and if someone is known to be a complainer or grumbler, we will meet with them and explain that this kind of pattern is damaging to the church and that it is not acceptable. It is not surprising that there is very little grumbling in our congregation. Let me be clear again, we invite honest and prayerful input on all topics in the church. But, a chronic complainer is always lovingly confronted and asked to stop their sinful behavior. Please feel free to share this story with your congregation and invite them to begin the same practice.

Illustration- Show a short home-made video with a collection of encouraging statements.

- Talk about the power of blessing and look at some of the Seismic Shift Suggestions for sharing words of encouragement (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 154-158). Give a vision of what could happen in your congregation if everyone committed to speak words of blessing to each other.

Ask the questions: Are your words filled with blessing and affirmation? What will it take for you to control your tongue? (PP) (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestions: Three options listed (PP).

(PP) (TO) The Shift from Served to Serving...The message of ministry (John 13:3-5 and Mark 10:45)

Read- Chapter eleven of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: (PP) John 13:1-17; Philippians 2:3-8 and Mark 10:45 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

- Look at John 13 and give a vision of Jesus washing the feet of those he loves...this includes us. If we had been there, he would have washed our feet. He would also have called us to wash each other's feet (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 162-163).

Illustration- As you teach about Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, you might want to invite someone up to sit on a chair and allow you to wash their feet as you talk about the heart and call of Jesus. Have a basin of water and a towel ready. Talk about how foot-washing was a low form of service in Jesus' day.

- Spend time looking at three areas of service God wants us to commit to move into action (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 165-170):

- Serving in Our Homes
- Serving in the Church
- Serving those Outside of the Church

Focus on practical little steps we can take toward serving in each of these areas. Look specifically at ways people can connect in service in your church at this time and also in your community.

Ask the question: What is a first step of service you can take in your home, school, work place or church? (PP) (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestions: Homework project (PP).

(PP) (TO) The Shift from Flattery to Truth-Telling...speaking the truth with grace (Zechariah 8:16-17)

Read- Chapter twelve of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: Zechariah 8:16-17; (PP) Ephesians 4:14-16 and Proverbs 12:19-22 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

- Talk about how our culture is sadly comfortable with lying. It is almost part of the fabric of our national consciousness. There are many illustrations from politics, pop-culture, and even the church. Yet, God knows that the best way to build a healthy and growing relationship is on a foundation of truth telling (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 172-174).
- Look at some of the reasons it is hard for us to speak the truth in a loving way. Admit that this is a challenge for all of us.
- Reflect on Matthew 18:15-17. This passage calls us to speak the truth in the right way with the right person (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 178-181). Jesus

does not leave room for us to vent about how someone has hurt us. He calls us to meet this person face-to-face and work through the issue. If they won't respond, then we go to the next step of the process and invite someone else along. Call your congregation to live by Jesus' teaching on this topic. Unity in the body of Christ and harmony among his people will be fortified if we can live by Jesus' teaching on this topic.

Ask the questions: Why is it so hard to tell the truth? Why does God call us to speak the truth in love, even when it is hard? (PP) (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestions: Three Ideas (PP).

Close with a challenge for each person to make one or more seismic shifts that will begin a process of building stronger and more healthy relationships.

Seismic Shifts Message 5

Shifts That Open the Floodgates of True Riches

Message Theme:

God has been good and provided all we have. This includes our financial resources and the abilities we use to acquire material things. The way we handle these good gifts reflects strongly on our faith and view of God. Since God has been so good to us, he desires for us to live with an awareness of his generosity and he wants us to hold the resources we have in open hands. In this message we will look at shifts that will allow us to see all resources as God's and not ours. This will happen as we learn to tithe, grow a generous heart, and live with a commitment to focus on heavenly treasures and not just the transitory things of this life.

Key Scriptures:

From the preaching resources:

- James 1:16-17
- Malachi 3:6-12
- Hebrews 13:15-16
- Matthew 6:19-21

From the weekly reading guide:

- Malachi 3
- Matthew 6:19-24
- 1 Timothy 6
- Luke 12:13-34
- 2 Corinthians 8
- 2 Corinthians 9

Brief Message Outline:

Shifts That Open the Floodgates of True Riches

- The Shift from Mine to God's (James 1:17 and Malachi 3:10)
- The Shift from Hamsters to Sharers (2 Corinthians 9:6-8 and Hebrews 13:16)
- The Shift from Fleeting Wealth to True Wealth (Matthew 6:19-21)

Prayer Direction:

The topic of money, giving and generosity is avoided by many of us who are called to a preaching ministry. The truth is, too many people get upset when a pastor starts talking about how they should use their financial resources. To some people, this is an off-limit topic that pastors and teachers should avoid. But, the Bible speaks about the joy and meaning that come to our lives when we see our resources through the eyes of God who has given us everything we have. As you prepare to bring this message, pray in some of the following directions:

- Thank God for the resources he has given you and take time to offer them back to him to be used for his glory.
- Pray for courage to present this message with clarity and boldness. Ask God to help you address this topic in a way that will help people see that living with their resources available to God is the best way to live.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to move in the life of your church so that many people will be moved to experience the freedom and joy of living a life of overflowing generosity.

Creative Message Elements:

Lawn Dominos- Consider using your set of “Lawn Dominos” at the start of this message to reinforce the idea that little movements can have a big impact. Set them up in a new and more complex configuration, talk again about the idea of seismic shifts, and then topple the first one and let them fall. Once again, I encourage that you do this, in some form, each week of the series. The key will be creativity.

Beach Balls- In section five of *Seismic Shifts* I tell the story about a little boy who would not share the balls he found in the church nursery. I suggest that you tell this story (or read it) as part of your message this week. Before the service, place five medium sized beach balls around the worship center. Don't give any explanation; just put them in different seats. As you tell the story, mention that it would make more sense if you had five beach balls to illustrate the point. Ask if anyone happens to have a beach ball handy that they could loan you. Then, have people in the congregation toss the five balls forward. (Use beach balls because they are light and won't hurt if they bop someone on the head.)

As you tell the story about the little boy (be sure to mention that they will read the story in the book...this will encourage them to keep reading) try to hold on to all five balls. It will be almost impossible, but will make the point. I even played a little catch with a few people in the front row as I talked about how life is more fun when we share what we have. The little boy who spent the whole nursery time keeping others from using the balls had no fun at all. He would have had a better time just using one ball and sharing with others. They could have played

together. In the same way, if we spend our lives gathering and protecting our resources, we miss the joy of sharing with others.

Hamsters- You might want to have a young person in your church bring a hamster to church (in a cage). Have this up on a table near where you will teach. As you talk about how we can have a hamster spirit, use it as a prop. Be clear that hamsters hoard by nature, it does not make them bad, it is just the way they are. The difference is that with people, we have a choice. Though our natural inclination might be to hoard, we can choose to be generous and live the way God intended.

Extended Message Outline:

Shifts That Open the Flood Gates of True Riches (PP) (TO)

Illustration- Use your dominos to reinforce the big impact one small change or movement can make. Tie this in to the topic of how we see our material resources. In this message we will discover that true contentment and riches come when we see all we have as God's, when we choose to share what we have freely, and when we begin to invest in things that last forever.

Illustration- Talk about the money monster. You can read the story from *Seismic Shifts* (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 184-185), or you can tell your own version about how the love of money can take on monster-like power in our lives. If you want to be real creative, you could bring in a bed and have it set up in the front of the church. When you talk about the money monster, you could stand on the bed.

Ask the question: Are you experiencing a life of abundance and overflowing blessing from God? (PP) (TO)

(PP) (TO) The Shift from Mine to God's...a new perspective (James 1:17 and Malachi 3:10)

Read- Chapter thirteen of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: (PP) Malachi 3:8-11; Matthew 6:19-24 and (PP) James 1:17 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

- Teach on the biblical principle of tithing (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 189-192). Don't be shy about this. Those who learn that all they have is a gift from God and who give the first ten percent back to the Lord discover more joy, peace and contentment than those who keep everything for themselves.

Testimony- If you have a person who has taken the journey to tithing, you might want to have them share a brief testimony about how God has blessed them as they have learned that all they have belongs to God.

- Choose some or all of the tithing questions from the book (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 194-199) and give biblical and practical answers to these questions.
 - What is a tithe?
 - Is tithing a maximum or a minimum?
 - Why does God want us to tithe?
 - Is tithing a form of legalism?
 - Must I give my tithe to the church?
 - Should I tithe if I am struggling with my finances?
 - Should I wait to tithe until I am out of debt?
 - If I tithe am I guaranteed to get back more money?

As you respond to these questions, use your own insights, your knowledge of your church culture, and your study of the Bible to form your answers.

Ask the questions: What will help you gain a heavenly perspective on resources? (PP) (TO) Does the idea of tithing seem radically foreign and presumptuous or does it make sense and feel appropriate? (PP)

Seismic Shift Suggestions: Three ideas (PP).

(PP) (TO) The Shift from Hamsters to Sharers...A transformed heart (2 Corinthians 9:6-8; 1 Timothy 6:17-19 and Hebrews 13:16)

Read- Chapter fourteen of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: 2 Corinthians 9:1-15; Psalm 37:25-26 and (PP) Hebrews 13:16 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

Illustration- Use the story from the book about the little boy in the nursery (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 206-207). Focus on how God wants us to find joy as we realize that sharing is more fun than selfishness. Use some of the ideas from the "Creative Message Idea" section.

- Reflect on how God wants us to live with an understanding of his gracious provision as well as a commitment to joyfully share what we have with him and others.

Illustration- Talk about the nature of hamsters. If you have one with you, show it to the congregation and be clear that the very nature of hamsters is to hoard. This is also in our nature. The difference is that we have a choice. We can make a conscious decision to be a sharer and not a hamster.

- Review the five lessons of generosity (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 207-212). Look at God's plan for us to grow a generous heart and live a generous lifestyle:
 - Giving is counter-cultural
 - Anyone can be generous
 - Giving has rewards
 - Giving indicates the condition of our hearts
 - The church is called to be generous

Ask the questions: What are some of the consequences if we hoard the resources God has put in our care? What might God do if we live with open hands when it comes to resources? (PP) (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestions: Three ideas (PP).

(PP) (TO) The Shift from Fleeting Wealth to True Wealth...long term investments (Matthew 6:19-21)

Read- Chapter fifteen of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: (PP) Matthew 6:19-21 and 1 Timothy 6:17-19 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

- Reflect on the things that really matter. When we are on our death bed, drawing near the end, what are the things that will really matter? We can be sure that material stuff will not be on the top of the list!
- Jesus warned us to avoid storing up temporary treasures. Talk about the futility of living with the primary goal of accumulating material wealth (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 214-218).
- Look at God's desire for us to invest in things that will last forever. Spend time teaching on the five investment secrets (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 218-223):
 - Investment Secret 1- A heart in love with God
 - Investment Secret 2- Helping Christians grow in their faith
 - Investment Secret 3- Caring for the poor, outcast and forgotten
 - Investment Secret 4- Strategic and consistent giving
 - Investment Secret 5- Sharing the good news of Jesus

Ask the questions: What are the things we save and collect that will eventually go up in smoke? What will last forever and how can we begin to save in this bank account? (PP) (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestions: Three ideas (PP).

Close by talking about how God gives us all some Smarties. Our decision is what we will do with them. You might want to read the story about Dustin and Smarties (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 188-189) or just talk about the concept. Let people know that when they leave the service they will get two rolls of Smarties. One will be for them and one is for them to share with someone else. Let this one little act of sharing their Smarties be an inspiration for new steps of generosity.

Seismic Shifts Message 6

Shifts That Will Help You Impact Your Community and the World

Message Theme:

Not only did “God so love the world,” but he wants us to love the world too. God longs to see his people bring the message of his grace in a way that is authentic and winsome. To do this we need to make a shift from thinking primarily about ourselves and turn our attention toward those who are not yet part of God’s family. We also need to discover our God-given style of evangelism. Every follower of Jesus is called to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16) but we each have a unique way of sharing our faith that fits us. If followers of Jesus are going to have maximum impact on this world we will need to discover how God has wired us for the work of evangelism. Finally, in this message we will learn about how to walk with people as they take a journey to Jesus.

Key Scriptures:

From the preaching resources:

- Matthew 9:37-38
- 1 Peter 3:15
- Luke 7:34

From the weekly reading guide:

- Matthew 28 and 9:35-38
- Acts 1
- Acts 2
- Philippians 1
- 1 Corinthians 3
- Luke 15

Brief Message Outline:

Shifts That Will Help You Impact Your Community and the World

- The Shift from Us to Them (Matthew 28:18-20 and Matthew 9:37-38)
- The Shift from “One Size Fits All” to Your Outreach Style (1 Peter 3:15)
- The Shift from Closing the Deal to Making a Journey (1 Corinthians 3:5-9)

Prayer Direction:

Mobilizing a church for the work of outreach is one of the greatest challenges in ministry. All the forces of hell are thrown against the work of evangelism. As you prepare to bring this message, pray for:

- The Holy Spirit to soften hearts and open ears to hear the Father's invitation to enter into the harvest fields of evangelism.
- Gentle boldness as you bring a message that will challenge each believer in your congregation to move beyond their comfort level when it comes to sharing their faith.
- God to do a mighty work of revival in your community as your church members prepare to walk with people on their journey toward the Father.

Creative Message Elements:

Lawn Dominos- Consider using your set of "Lawn Dominos" at the start of this message to reinforce the idea that little movements can have a big impact. Set them up in a new and more complex configuration, talk again about the idea of seismic shifts, and then topple the first one and let them fall. Once again, I encourage that you do this, in some form, each week of the series. This will be your final week, so make this your best domino display.

Dominos to Go- Purchase enough boxes of regular size dominos so that every person who comes to worship can have one domino when they leave the service. Place them in baskets and have them passed out at the close of the message. Encourage everyone to take a domino and keep it in their pocket, their purse, on their night stand or somewhere else where they will see it on a regular basis. Let this be a reminder of their commitment to make seismic shifts in their lives.

When we did this we found a dollar store that sold boxes of dominos and it was very inexpensive. If you have a large number of people, be sure to order the dominos in advance so you have them for the final service.

We did this after our final seismic shifts services and many of our church members still carry a domino with them. One day, about six months after our Seismic Shifts campaign, one of my boys came home from school and told me that one of his classmates had opened her pencil holder at school and a domino fell out. My son asked her, "Is that the domino you got at church after seismic shifts?" She told him that it was. What she told him next blessed my heart beyond words.

She told him that she had put her domino in her pencil holder so she would see it every day when she was at school. Since she had put it there, three of her classmates had noticed the domino and asked her why it was in her pencil holder. In each case she told them about seismic shifts and how Jesus is the one that can help us experience the greatest change of all.

Extended Message Outline:

Shifts that Will Help You Impact Your Community and the World (PP) (TO)

Illustration- Tell a story about a time you came to understand that the harvest really is plentiful. You can use the story in the introduction to part six (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 226-228) or your own story.

Ask the question: How is your life, and our church, impacting our community and world with the message of Jesus Christ?

(PP) (TO) The Shift from Us to Them...a different vantage point
(Matthew 28:18-20 and Matthew 9:37-38)

Read- Chapter sixteen of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:7-8 and (PP) (TO) Matthew 9:37-38 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

- If your congregation struggles with the “What about us?” syndrome, talk about this (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 229-231). Challenge people to turn their hearts outward, just like Jesus did when he reached out to each of us.
- Talk about the challenges that come with turning our eyes and attention off of ourselves and on those who are lost and wandering far from God.
- Look at three shifts we can make that will help us reach out with the message of Jesus (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 234-238):
 - From Clean to Messy
 - From “You Come” to “We Go”
 - From My World to Your World

Ask the question: How can we get our attention and focus off of ourselves and on those who are still outside of God’s family? (PP) (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestions: Three ideas (PP).

(PP) (TO) The Shift from “One Size Fits All” to Your Outreach Style
(1 Peter 3:15)

Read- Chapter seventeen of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: Philippians 1:15-18; Luke 15:3-7 and (PP) 1 Peter 3:15 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

Illustration- Talk about how discovering our unique way of outreach can be like trying on different outfits. Have a full length mirror and three shirts or sweaters (one that is way too big, one that is too small, and one that fits perfectly). As you try on the small and large ones, make the point that some clothes just don't fit us. Explain that discovering our outreach style is like this. We need to keep trying various options until we find one that fits us. As you talk about finding the right fit, put on the one that is the right size.

- Give an overview of the six evangelism styles that are presented in the *Becoming a Contagious Christian* curriculum (published by Zondervan). Talk about how each style fits different people. No style is better than another. The key is discovering our way or reaching out and sharing the good news of Jesus (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 243-248).
 - A Confrontational Approach
 - An Intellectual Approach
 - A Testimonial Approach
 - An Interpersonal Approach
 - An Invitational Approach
 - A Serving Approach
- If you want great examples of how each of these evangelism styles can be implemented in a local church, read the book, *Building a Contagious Church*, by Mark Mittelberg. It is filled with practical examples.
- If your church does not do Contagious Christian training (using the curriculum developed by Mark Mittelberg, Lee Strobel and Bill Hybels) I would encourage you to plan a class as a follow-up to this message. You might want to challenge those who want to discover and develop their unique and God-given outreach style to sign up for this class and attend it the next time it is offered.
- Close this part of the message by looking at how all of the styles have two things in common. They still lead to a place where we can articulate our faith and the message of Jesus. Also, no matter what style we have, prayer is absolutely essential (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 249-252).

Ask the questions: Why can't we all do outreach the same way? How has God uniquely wired you and shaped you for his work of outreach into the world? (PP) (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestions: Three ideas (PP).

(PP) (TO) The Shift from Closing the Deal to Making a Journey

(1 Corinthians 3:5-9)

Read- Chapter eighteen of *Seismic Shifts* and draw ideas from this portion of the book. Be sure to draw the Seismic Shift Suggestions into the application portions of your message.

Read: (PP) 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 and Luke 7:34 (or whatever portion you feel is appropriate)

Illustration- Give an example of how sometimes doing outreach can be very forced and unnatural. You can read the story about patches at the beginning of chapter eighteen (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 253-254) or tell your own story. The key is to admit that in many ways Christians have done a poor job of walking with people and we have tried to shove the message of Jesus down their throat. God's plan is for us to be in relationship and enter a journey of learning and discovery with those who are moving toward faith in Jesus.

Illustration- Tell a story about a person in your congregation (yourself or someone else) who has modeled what it looks like to walk with a spiritual seeker in a close friendship, over time, that led to a authentic relationship with Jesus.

Testimony- You might want to have a person from your congregation give a brief testimony about how someone walked with them over time (even years) as they journeyed toward Jesus. Let this story be an example of the value of patience and consistent friendship as well as sharing faith.

- Look at 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 and reflect on how God is the one who can draw people to Jesus and change lives. This truth should free us from undue pride as well as pressure. We can scatter seed and water, but only God can bring the growth. This means we do not get the glory when someone comes to Jesus, and we do not get the blame if they do not.

Ask the questions: Who is one person God has placed in your life that you can walk with as they learn about Jesus? What can you do to help them along on their journey? (PP) (TO)

Who is one person that walked at your side as you walked toward Jesus? How did their friendship and patience help you open your heart to the Savior? (TO)

Seismic Shift Suggestions: Three ideas (PP).

Close your message talking about how outreach is not about numbers, personal goals, or spiritual trophies. It is about people. People who are loved by God and who we should love too (*Seismic Shifts*, pages 256-261). Challenge those gathered to commit to grow in love toward those who are still spiritually seeking.